

RES15-005

Wilmington, Delaware
January 15, 2015

#4015

Sponsors:

Council
President
Gregory

Council
Members
Walsh
Chukwuocha
Congo
D. Brown
Shabazz
Prado
Dorsey Walker
Williams
Freel
M. Brown
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Wright

WHEREAS, on New Year's Eve, outgoing Illinois Governor Pat Quinn granted clemency to three abolitionists convicted of "crimes" for hiding and helping escaped slaves; and

WHEREAS, similar efforts have begun to pardon three notable Delawareans for criminal convictions connected with their endeavors in smuggling slaves to freedom; and

WHEREAS, among those being considered for a pardon are Thomas Garrett, John Hunn and Samuel Burris; and

WHEREAS, prominent Quaker abolitionist Thomas Garrett, who is credited with helping more than 2,700 slaves to freedom, worked closely with Harriet Tubman, abolitionist and leader of the Underground Railroad; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his abolitionist work, Garrett supported the City's black residents and generously provided the funding for land where Bishop Peter Spencer built the nation's first fully independent black church known as Mother African Union Church; and

WHEREAS, Odessa area farmer and abolitionist John Hunn was a member of the Camden Friends Meeting and was convicted with Garrett for aiding the Hawkins family, whose trail to freedom is documented at the New Castle Court House Museum; and

WHEREAS, a free black man and partner of Hunn's, Samuel Burris was heavily involved in helping slaves from Maryland and southern Delaware and was caught, jailed and convicted with the automatic sentence of being sold for slavery, but was ultimately released back to freedom by the highest bidder; and

WHEREAS, as eloquently stated by Governor Quinn "These early warriors for freedom put everything on the line to help their fellow man, and their civil disobedience paved the way for civil rights...[c]learing their criminal records shows how far we have come, but reminds us all that we should fight injustice wherever we find it."

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON, that Council salutes the unwavering humanitarian efforts of those who fought for the freedom of the enslaved, and further encourages Governor Jack

Markell to grant pardons for Thomas Garrett, John Hunn and Samuel Burris, who put their lives on the line to champion the cause.

Passed by City Council,
January 15, 2015

Attest: Maribel Seijo
City Clerk

Approved as to form this 15th
day of January, 2015.

Danny Chetani
Assistant City Solicitor